



WORK SESSION NOTES OF THE Edina Transportation Commission Committee of the Whole Work Session

Thursday, July 1, 2010

Edina City Hall

4801 West 50th Street

Community Room

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tom Bonneville, Jennifer Janovy, Josh Sprague,

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Usha Abramovitz, Julie Sierks, Michael Schroeder, Paul Nelson, Jean White, Geof Worker, Nathan Franzen

Note: Attendance is not required for Committee of the Whole meetings

STAFF PRESENT:

Jack Sullivan, Sharon Allison

Chair Janovy opened the meeting. She said Worker talked with the Mayor and was told the City Council would appreciate being kept informed of the ETC discussions. She said she would email the City Council once the ETC has come to some conclusions about scope. She restated why they were reviewing scope as follows (taken from her handout):

- Recognition that existing ETC policy has been incorporated in Transportation chapter of the Comprehensive Plan
- Recognition that areas identified in the Traffic Task Force report have been addressed
- Awareness that ETC ordinance indicates bylaws and we have none
- Planning Commission discussion of the ETC role in development proposals

And as a reminder of the ETC's authority, Janovy said the Council is the policy and legislative body of the City and the ETC is advisory to the Council, which means they can recommend policies or ordinances to the Council and that these policies and ordinances take effect only if approved by the Council. She said the ETC is not advisory to City staff and they do not direct City staff. City Council directs City staff through the City Manager and only goes to staff for information. Bonneville said another way to look at it is for the ETC to ask Council to allow ETC to do certain tasks and the Council would give staff permission to gather information or perform those tasks which could then go back to Council for approval as a policy.

Janovy said if there are existing ways that the City operates, the ETC cannot instruct staff to do something differently. The ETC can comment and make recommendations and/or recommend policy to be adopted that would direct a different way of doing things.

Bonneville said he suggested discussing scope of when the ETC is assigned to perform tasks - this can come either from Council thru staff or through guidelines for the Council related to when it is appropriate to ask ETC to perform a task, e.g. whenever there is a street with only

500 cars a day not enough to be concerned because a street with two lanes is capable of handling 1000 cars. He said he picked 1000 cars a day as a guide to be used for the total ADT. Bonneville said he likes the matrix that was suggested at the previous meeting. 1000 cars would be one part of the matrix and another triggering factor would be if the Council wants them to work on something, no matter the parameters. He said they could create a series of reasons for ETC to work on task. Sprague said in lieu of the ETC looking at certain things there is the possibility of having policy that acts in place of having a review and a third category is policy and review or just review.

Janovy said the minutes from the last meeting show a working premise that the ETC has an advisory role in those areas related to traffic and transportation in Edina where the City Council takes action. The areas are defined as (taken from handout):

- ETC policies – as stated above, the City Council approves policies
 - ETC Policy/NTMP
 - TIA policy not approved by City Council

Janovy asked why the TIA was not approved by Council. Sullivan said he is not sure why. Bonneville said they should not let policy get in the way of action. Sprague said policy provides standard operating procedures. Janovy said policies can be well conceived and expedite action and that they can be clearly written. Policies can also provide directions for when the policy doesn't apply and what to do then. She said it could be as simply as a check-off worksheet. Bonneville said he believe this is going to cause all directions to come down from Council.

- Traffic Impact Analyses – the City Council approves development proposals; TIA reports may be a required submittal
- Transportation Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan – the Council approves the Comprehensive Plan
- Local Area Traffic Task Force – the council adopted the “framework” Janovy said she sees this as being done and Sullivan concurred. Sprague said it is mentioned in the ordinance.
- Traffic signs – Recommendations for regulatory signs brought forward by TSC; can be posted only with Council approval
- Sidewalk petition – Sidewalks approved by the City Council

Other than petitioning for a sidewalk, Sprague asked how other sidewalk segments are implemented. Sullivan said an old State Aid study shows missing sidewalk links and staff initiates including these missing links when neighborhood projects are done. He said staff does not actively look for locations to install sidewalks due to funding and a back-log of projects. He explained further that State Aid sidewalks are paid for using gas tax funds while others are assessed, e.g. the Halifax Ave sidewalk was approximately \$1,500/property, payable over three years. If a sidewalk is in a business district or school zone, the business district is assessed and the City contributes 25%. Staff time is included in the assessment also.

Janovy asked if a franchise fee on gas or electricity could be used for sidewalks. Sullivan said a franchise fee has been discussed for a variety of purposes, including sidewalks and streetlighting. He said the sidewalk on the west frontage road of Hwy. 100 (Eden Avenue to Eastview Drive) was petitioned and because it was not assessable, it was budgeted for over 5-years in the CIP. Janovy asked about the City's surplus funds and Sullivan said he was not knowledgeable in this area, but he is aware of the cost reductions that Public Works has been doing for the past year or so. Janovy said funding is always a problem and that although a franchise fee isn't a tax it is a government-imposed fee.

- Traffic Safety Committee – City Council approves report or directs further action
- Street maintenance – Equipment/supplies approved in CIP
- Signs/stripping – Approved by the City Council

Major re-stripping that changes the road reconfiguration would go to Council but not a mill and overlay that is going to be redone exactly as it was before.

- Grants – Grant funds must be accepted by the Council
- Bike Edina Task Force – City Council included Bike Plan in Comprehensive Plan
- Metro Transit – City Council may be consulted by Metro Transit on route changes
- Hennepin County projects in Edina – Such as France Ave restriping. City Council may be asked to support or not oppose.
- State projects within Edina – Such as Bren Rd interchange, or 494/169. City Council may be asked to support, not oppose, and/or pay portion of project costs.

State projects usually require a Joint Powers Agreement and Council authorizes fees that Mn/DOT charges.

- State statutes – Mn/DOT rules – the City Council may pass resolutions in support of or opposing legislation, rules changes, etc.

Janovy said she looked at the 2008, 2009 and 2010 agendas and noted that the ETC hears presentations on many topics for informational purposes. She said the ETC most often takes action on developments, and have done very little on neighborhood level traffic concerns (but did do W. 70th Study and NE Edina).

Janovy moved on to what the ETC Role may be, as it relates to the above scope. The following were suggested for consideration:

- Recommend policy only
 - For example, draft and recommend a policy that the Council approves and City staff carries out. No ongoing ETC involvement, apart from periodic policy review.
- Recommend review only
 - Item appears on agenda for ETC review and action.
- Recommend policy and review
 - Draft and recommend a policy that, if adopted, governs the process by which review is given and actions are taken; may provide guidance to both ETC and staff or only ETC.

Janovy said if the above is accepted as their scope, there would be no assumption that they would take an active ongoing role in each, but instead would fill gaps with policy where necessary. For example, when a dog is hit on a street, as recently happened, she said this

should not have been an issue for the Council. Bonneville said they cannot be involved in every minor traffic issue. He said the dog getting hit is a police issue, not ETC. Sprague said the policy would explain where the complaint goes and how to handle certain issues. Janovy said further that a complaint from a street with 500 cars without a crash record, for example, may not be considered a traffic issue by the City because it is functioning correctly. She said the remedy for the concern may not involve engineering but may involve education and enforcement. Education and enforcement are two areas that the ETC has not investigated much.

Janovy said the ETC's responsibility, based on the ordinance, is the local streets system. How the scope fits within the ETC ordinance was discussed next. Janovy said the existing purposes and duties are to:

1. Advise the Council on matters relating to the **operation of the local street system** with respect to **traffic volumes, congestion, and functional classification**, but not maintenance activities of the City.
2. Review and comment on plans to enhance mass transit opportunities to the City.
3. Review the findings of the Local Traffic Task Force and offer recommendations for implementation.
4. Evaluate methods for **traffic calming** and other **speed and volume mitigation measures** and **recommend their implementation** where appropriate.

Janovy said some things to think about are:

- Define each term in bold above. For example, what does "operation of local street system with respect to traffic volumes," mean? What does it involve?
- How does each of the above areas (scope) fit within the existing ETC ordinance?
- What is the connection? What is needed to make the connection?
- What, if anything, does the existing ETC ordinance leave out?

Janovy said the higher level streets that Bonneville is interested in are not explicitly included in the ordinance. She said they will need to keep this in mind if they recommend a change to the ordinance, but if the ordinance is left as does it limit ETC scope to residential and collector streets? What does "local" mean? Does it mean streets within city limits or just streets that are under City's jurisdiction? Bonneville said the Council could hear ETC recommendation on arterial streets even though they do not have jurisdiction. He said they should be able to opine even on Hwy. 100 because of impacts.

Sprague said issues come forward in two ways – residents' complaints or reconstruction. He said he does not see the ETC becoming involved with reconstruction unless it's a collector street or higher; however, he said they want to discuss something, they could, but it would not be actionable; the issue would be reflected in the minutes as being discussed, which the Council would see.

Janovy said it sounded like Sprague and Bonneville would like to focus on collector and above. She asked though, what about a street like hers, for example that is close to park and that may

be considered for a sidewalk when it comes up for reconstruction. Sprague said a fill in policy would cover local streets and Complete Streets would cover higher level streets, i.e. collector, etc.

Janovy said they need a toolbox that includes education and enforcement for residents who believe their street has too many cars. Bonneville said residents need a place to call but not a toolbox. Sprague said Boyd (City's traffic safety coordinator) is the filter now when residents call. Maybe Boyd needs a public information handout that he could send to residents that would be standard for everyone. Janovy gave an example of a resident addressing the Council with a stop sign request and it was discovered that while the City was following the MUTCD, there was an error in the City's stop sign policy. She said the sidewalk petition process is confusing and could be made clearer and that communication with residents needs to be brought to forefront to prevent misinformation and to educate residents' perceptions.

Janovy said she thinks the ETC has a role with local traffic, Bonneville said he does not. Sprague said the ETC currently gets the minutes from the TSA but, as a current practice, cannot discuss the items. Bonneville said he favors having documentation of standard operating procedures but nothing more.

Janovy said she is not sure what "operation of local street system" as used in the ordinance means. Bonneville said they need to define the word "operation." He said this could be involvement with the function of the street--such as turning movement, speed limits or other important factors for traffic, even recommending stop signs. What does "operations as it relates to traffic volume" mean? This could mean striping, lane widths, signalization, stop signs, yield signs, caution, blinkers, etc. What does "congestion" mean? This means Level of Service (LOS) A, B, C, and D and is most often used to refer to intersection. LOS D is usually acceptable in most communities, said Sullivan. "...but not maintenance" probably means not getting involved with things like snowplowing, doing repairs due to aging of roadway, etc. Janovy said residents may want to know about pavement management and how this impacts the decision for reconstruction.

Sprague said like Bloomington, they would want to be involved in the redesign discussion as it related to traffic volume and calming; therefore, the ETC needs to be informed each year so the ETC can weigh-in. An on-camera presentation would also inform the public of the annual reconstruction schedule so the public could attend meetings to make public comment if desired. He said Engineering would continue using their established process, such as open house, etc., which is well managed. Janovy said there could be times before the feasibility study where it would be helpful for the ETC to review to avoid what happened with the NE reconstruction and to also see if Complete Streets are covered. Sprague asked why the ETC is bypassed. Janovy said "maintenance" is probably interpreted to also mean reconstruction. Sprague said it would the ETC's review of street reconstruction would be brief and Janovy said the review would be primarily to see if Complete Streets are being implemented, etc. She said the ETC has a role to play as it relates to volume, speed, and traffic calming, although they still need to define what this role specifically means. Janovy asked if there is a way that the ETC could create a policy that would make the process more efficient for managing residents' input and feedback. Sullivan said they are always open to new ideas. Bonneville said he is satisfied with the current process; however, it could be publicized in the newspaper.

Bonneville said a weakness is not having all the numbers relating to Edina streets, such as a map of all ADTs, for example. He does not know if there is a traffic count for Browndale or W. 44th, for example. Sullivan said it is difficult to show ADTs on a map on a citywide scale, but

data is available for State Aid streets and many local streets. Bonneville said definition is needed for development of policy and they do not have all the intelligence (data related to street ADT, LOS, crash, speeds, etc.) to formulate a policy. The data is computerized but is hard to manipulate said Sullivan. Crash data comes to Engineering one year later.

The meeting's discussion was summarized as follows:

1. Street Fact sheet—which would provide known data about every street discussed (such as speeds, ADT, pedestrian facilities, bike facilities, roadbed width, transportation right of way, LOS, etc.)
2. Public information handouts to support communication with residents about traffic concerns—can be given to residents when they contact Boyd
3. Road reconstruction:
 - (a) Does it fall under ordinance as written or does the ordinance need to be redrafted?
 - (b) Could the ETC have a limited review role
4. Beginning of year have Sullivan talk about yearly road reconstruction plans

Janovy said the ordinance does not contemplate what Bonneville is interested in so they will need to discuss this further. She asked how do you effect changes when Mn/DOT, for example, has the authority, and when there is an opportunity to influence such as France Avenue. Bonneville said they could have each commissioner bring up a street each month for review. He said he was frustrated because they did not talk about policies and procedures and what their performance and function is and as planned.

Meeting adjourned.